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**USAFRICOM: Operational Considerations Are Paramount in Selecting a Headquarters
Location**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

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Abstract

USAFRICOM: Operational Considerations Are Paramount in Selecting a Headquarters Location

The influence of the African continent on world stability has recently been recognized by the United States, China, and several European nations. The United States has outlined several strategic concerns for the continent, including preventing terrorist safe-havens, slowing China's expansive influence in the region, retarding the spread of HIV/AIDS, improving regional stability and responding to humanitarian crises. America's first step in resolving these enormous problems is the creation of Africa Command. The location of the new Unified Command headquarters has been the subject of much speculation, but it is widely believed it will ultimately be located on the African continent. Many nations are skeptical about the United States' commitment to the continent and have openly refused to host the headquarters, although it is commonly thought that many nations are willing to host the command but do not want to appear too eager. The thesis of the paper is that operational objectives and mission requirements should be the primary driver behind location selection, rather than making the decision based solely upon strategic concerns. This is primarily due to USAFRICOM not building facilities of its own on the continent and having to rely on existing infrastructure. The paper outlines seven primary needs of USAFRICOM and concludes that multiple locations will be required to achieve USAFRICOM's objectives. The locations recommended are: Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya.

Introduction

The United States government's placement of United States Africa Command's headquarters will have significant strategic and operational implications on the African continent and will be the most decisive factor in the success of the fledgling Unified Command. Unlike a traditional Unified Command, United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) will focus on preventing wars rather than fighting them.¹ Its primary mission is to enhance regional security by assisting African partner nations with knowledge development and training, provide humanitarian assistance and stabilization in disparate areas, and improve crisis-response capabilities across the continent.² The leaders of USAFRICOM indicate that they do not plan to build large-scale military bases or infrastructure on the vast African continent; instead, it will rely upon and enhance existing transportation and communication networks to meet mission requirements.³ The lack of a traditional military base from which to operate, the enormity of the African continent and an extremely diverse mission set dictate that operational and mission considerations be the primary driver in the selection of USAFRICOM's headquarters location(s).

United States Strategic Objectives in Africa

The reasons for the creation of USAFRICOM are as unique as the continent itself; therefore, it is imperative that one comprehend the major problems that plague the African peoples and how they relate to the United States' strategic objectives to fully understand the need for such a command. In February of 2007, President George W. Bush outlined the specific goals of USAFRICOM and how they relate to the National Security Strategy of the United States:

“This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.”⁴

- President George W. Bush

The United States strategic objectives on the African continent are many, including enhancing U.S. and African security by preventing terrorist safe-havens, securing on and off-shore natural resources, expanding the U.S. economy, responding to growing Chinese influence and resource consumption, containing the numerous regional armed conflicts, responding to the growing number of humanitarian crises, retarding the spread of HIV/AIDS, and reducing cybercrime, human-trafficking and the drug trade.⁵

As the United States witnessed in Afghanistan prior to October 2001, terrorists find strongholds in areas where governance is weak, violent extremism flourishes and western influence is minimal.⁶ Many parts of Africa now have these ideal conditions and that is a significant concern in the United States' Global War on Terrorism.

“I am concerned about large ungoverned areas of Africa that are possibly melting pots for the disenfranchised of the world, so to speak, the terrorist breeding grounds. I believe that we're going to have to engage more in that theater.”⁷

- General James L. Jones

A recent journal article from the Jamestown Foundation, a think-tank that focuses on world terrorism, reported that paramilitary groups, extremist activities and several Jihadists that have ties to Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, are becoming more prevalent in the Republic of South Africa.⁸ Preventing the conditions that allow these activities to prosper is the United States' primary strategic objective on the continent.

The United States currently imports 18 percent of its oil from partners in Africa and that number is expected to grow to 25 percent by 2015, surpassing the Middle East as the primary region from which the United States gets its crude.⁹ This fact elevates maritime security, specifically in the Gulf of Guinea, to the strategic level.

Making Africa physically and economically secure is critical to luring American investment and businesses; however, this can only occur if there is a healthy and educated work force from which companies can hire, suitable infrastructure for transportation of manufactured goods and if

there are stable local and national governments. Several American companies are already conducting business in Africa on a limited basis or are considering future investment, including: Chevron, Shell Oil, Coca Cola®, Oracle®, Boeing, Pfizer®, Merck® and the Chrysler Corporation.¹⁰

China, an oil exporter until 1993, has become a major oil importer due to its burgeoning economy.¹¹ In 2007, China imported 30 percent of its oil from Africa: primarily from the Sudan, Angola and the Congo.¹² China is also a major consumer of other natural resources on the continent and has become Africa's third largest trading partner.¹³ A policy paper released by the Chinese government highlights China's ambitions on the African continent:

“The Chinese government encourages and supports Chinese enterprises' investment and business in Africa, and will continue to provide preferential loans and buyer credits to this end.”¹⁴

- Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs

The success of their national policy is highlighted by the fact that 700 Chinese companies currently conduct business in Africa, representing an increase in trade from 1 billion U.S. Dollars in 1995 to a staggering 50 billion U.S. Dollars in 2006.¹⁵

Even more of a concern to the United States, is the political influence China wields over 47 of the 53 African nations.¹⁶ China is using its economic aid to create strategic alliances that will benefit them in multilateral settings like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO).¹⁷ Since most African nations have adopted a bloc-voting mentality, China is hoping to influence them to vote in their favor on such important issues as human rights and the recognition of Taiwan as sovereign Chinese territory.¹⁸ In fact, China currently requires African nations, to whom it provides aid, to openly recognize its “One-China” policy.¹⁹ The United States and China indisputably have competing economic and strategic objectives in Africa.

One of the most notable problems in Africa is the ethnic civil war and genocide occurring in the Darfur region. The war, which began in February 2003, started because nomadic herders

traveled farther south than normal into Sudan due to drought and disturbed the farmers in the area.²⁰ In its most simplistic form, the war is about land. The fighting is primarily between the Janjaweed, recruited from Arab Baggara tribes, and various non-Arab rebel groups. By some estimates 200 to 400 thousand people have been murdered and another two million refugees displaced to surrounding nations like Chad and Cameroon.²¹

“Millions of lives are at risk in forgotten or neglected crises in Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. These are the silent tsunamis of our time.”²²

- Jan Egeland

It is estimated that more than 313 million Africans live below the poverty level, which the World Health Organization defines as less than one U.S. Dollar per day, and struggle daily to find clean water and sustenance.²³ These represent only a couple of the many complex issues that have become a focus in recent years for the United Nations, World Health Organization and United States.

Another significant concern on the African continent, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, is that of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The virus has infected more than 32.8 million Africans and is spreading at a rate of 2.5 million new infections annually.²⁴ An anticipated two million Africans will die in 2008 from the disease, with over 80 percent of the infections and deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁵

Corruption abounds in many African nations and there are unstable areas that are potential breeding grounds for terrorists and organized crime.²⁶ A 2006 report from the Javelin Strategy and Research Corporation indicates that Americans reported losing an all-time high of 198.4 million U.S. Dollars to Internet fraud in 2006, up eight percent from 2005 levels of 183 million U.S. Dollars and 191 percent from 2004 levels of 68 million U.S. Dollars.²⁷ United States Department of the Treasury statistics indicate that of the Internet criminals who could be traced to their location, six percent resided in West Africa, specifically Nigeria.²⁸ The statistic may seem low at first glance,

but when one considers that it only represents crime against Americans and not against Europeans, where scams are more frequent, the number becomes more sobering. It is important to note that only 5.9 percent of Nigeria's population of 135 million has access to the Internet. If one considers the explosive 3,900 percent growth of Internet users in Nigeria since 2000, which is expected to persist over the next decade, there is sufficient evidence to support that cybercrime will continue to grow at an alarming rate.²⁹

The epicenter of human trafficking on the continent is West Africa, although Central and South Africa are also significant contributors to the trade.³⁰ The U.S. State Department estimates that between 600 to 800 thousand men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year.³¹ Most victims are used to fuel the sex industry in Europe and the Middle East, and the remainder are sold as slave laborers to work on plantations in Africa.³²

There were over 234 drug-trafficking arrests in West Africa during 2007, which is believed to only be a fraction of the illicit activity that is actually occurring.³³ Two seizures produced over 600 kilos of cocaine, which were destined for the United States and European cities.³⁴ Further complicating matters is the corruption of the military in the region who are thought to be facilitating the transfer of drugs off the continent.³⁵ This is a significant concern for the United States, because the money generated could be used to sponsor terrorism and anti-western activities.

Operational Objectives

United States Africa Command leaders and their planning cells have translated the strategic objectives into short-term and long-term operational objectives. Short-term operational objectives are designed to be achieved in less than two years, whereas, long-term operational objectives are designed to be achieved within two to fifteen years.³⁶ Africa Command's operational objectives are significantly different than most Unified Commands in that they predominantly reside within the category of Phase Zero operations.³⁷ The Joint Publication 5.0 defines Phase Zero operations as:

“Joint and multinational operations and interagency coordination inclusive of normal and routine military activities performed to dissuade or deter potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies. They are executed continuously with the intent to enhance international legitimacy and gain multinational cooperation in support of defined military and national strategic objectives.”³⁸

- Joint Publication 5.0

Phase Zero specific operational objectives for Africa include: expanding partnership capacities, building trust with African nations, conducting Theater Security Cooperation, building important counter-terrorism skills and supporting other non-military organizations in implementing humanitarian programs that promote regional stability.³⁹ It is important to note that each of these operational objectives will contribute to the accomplishment of several of the previously mentioned strategic objectives.

A short-term operational objective for USAFRICOM is to expand partnership capacities by teaching African nations to help themselves during humanitarian crises. This will be accomplished by the U.S. military educating African militaries on how to effectively and rapidly respond to emergencies, how to plan contingency operations, and the best methods to perform peace keeping operations.⁴⁰ In addition, it involves supplying African militaries with military hardware and peace-keeping equipment through the Foreign Military Sales program.⁴¹

Another short-term operational objective that will have lasting implications is the development of counter-terrorism skills. As evidenced by the persistence of world-wide terror acts, it is difficult to surveil and defeat organizations whose objective is to strike fear in the civilian population. To achieve these objectives U.S. military forces will provide specific intelligence and military training that allow for the detection, tracking and defeating of terrorist groups.

One of USAFRICOM's long-term operational objectives is Theater Security Cooperation, which in its simplest form, means developing allies for the future. Specific elements of this objective include: “building relationships that promote specified U.S. interests, building allied and friendly capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations, and providing U.S. forces with

peacetime and contingency access.”⁴² This is listed as a long-term objective because it requires that trust be established with African nations and that will take time to develop.

The most important long-term operational objective of USAFRICOM is to enable the work of non-military organizations in implementing humanitarian programs that promote regional stability. Africa Command will contribute the capabilities that these agencies lack: planning, manpower and logistics. Of the stated operational objectives, this is the one most likely to establish trust and long-term relationships with our African partners.

Dissecting the array of missions required to achieve USAFRICOM’s operational objectives is crucial to determining exactly what infrastructure and support is needed in a headquarters location. A review of USAFRICOM’s mission statement provides some insight into the mission sets that are unique to this Unified Command:

“United States Africa Command conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs and military-sponsored activities to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”⁴³

- USAFRICOM Mission Statement

The below listed mission sets will be the means by which USAFRICOM will meet its operational objectives. Infrastructure and assets required to complete these missions are key factors in the selection of an effective headquarters location(s). Specific USAFRICOM missions include:

- 1) Providing security assistance and security assistance reform
- 2) Providing military-to-military training
- 3) Improving professionalism through joint exercises
- 4) Assisting African navies with providing natural resource security in the Gulf of Guinea
- 5) Providing education and medical care to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS
- 6) Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- 7) Helping nations develop their markets and with economic transformation
- 8) Promoting democratic reform, stability security transition and reconstruction

9) When required, providing Non-Combatant Evacuation (NEO) and Contingency Plan (CONPLAN) development and execution.⁴⁴

No U.S. Military Bases in Africa

The United States has chosen not to build a traditional military base in Africa for several important reasons. The primary reason is it might imply to some that the United States intends to use extensive military force on the continent.⁴⁵ Finding a host for USAFRICOM's administrative headquarters is already controversial and a plan to construct a conventional military base would only further complicate negotiations. The cost of constructing a base would be a tremendous and unnecessary expense, and with a relatively small 2008 Fiscal Year operating budget of 75.5 million U.S. Dollars and proposed Fiscal Year 2009 operating budget of 392 million U.S. Dollars, any large-scale construction simply would not be plausible.⁴⁶ One large military facility would not allow USAFRICOM to meet its objectives due to the enormous size of the continent. Moreover, the infrastructure USAFRICOM needs for its objectives already exists in multiple locations. However, the most compelling reason not to build a base is that one is not required to conduct the missions that USAFRICOM plans to execute.

Headquarters Selection Criteria

Although the thesis of this paper is that operational objectives and mission sets should be the primary driver behind location selection, it would be parochial to think that strategic concerns have no place in the determination of USAFRICOM headquarters. The very first question the United States' government should consider is whether having a headquarters located on the African continent is necessary for the success of USAFRICOM? Several important factors must be considered before one can form a cogent opinion. The first consideration is that not all of the United States' Unified Command headquarters are located in the regions in which they focus.⁴⁷ Of the six U.S. Unified Commands, two, Central Command, which is based in Tampa Florida, and

Southern Command, based in Miami Florida, are not located in the areas they are designed to oversee.⁴⁸ (*Figure 2*) By all accounts these commands have been extremely successful in commanding operations from remote locations; however, the core missions that they conduct are uniquely different from the Phase Zero operations USAFRICOM will perform on a regular basis. Phase Zero operations in Africa are about building trust and partnerships, enhancing stability in the region and proving to Africans that they can rely upon the United States' support well into the future. Not locating USAFRICOM's headquarters on the African continent might make some nations perceive that U.S. support will be transitory and cause them to think carefully about aligning their governments with a superpower who has tendency to forget commitments once its own national security and economic objectives have been achieved. It is important to note that several countries, including Morocco, Algeria, Nigeria, Ghana, Djibouti, South Africa and Kenya have so far declined to host USAFRICOM for various reasons.⁴⁹ Most nations declined because they were dubious about the United States' true motivations for establishing USAFRICOM and whether it is an attempt at neo-colonialism.⁵⁰

A critical factor that also supports USAFRICOM headquarters being located on the African continent is that Africa is extremely vast and widespread communications networks are not readily available. For USAFRICOM to be successful it has to be positioned such that every government on the continent can easily access U.S. Representatives and recognize the ubiquity of USAFRICOM's presence.⁵¹ If the headquarters is not placed on the African continent it will marginalize USAFRICOM's success and undermine its ability to having lasting influence in the region.

Another important strategic consideration in the placement of USAFRICOM headquarters is the instant legitimacy the host nation's government is likely to receive as a result of the United States allying itself with that state. This is of critical importance because the United States' reputation and that of USAFRICOM could be eternally tarnished if a government is selected that is

not perceived favorably by other African nations or has a history of genocide or other human rights violations. Regardless of the care taken to select a suitable location, the presence of USAFRICOM headquarters will likely shift the power balance in the region and potentially spark regional conflict; the very essence of what USAFRICOM is trying to prevent. This is one of the most important strategic considerations the United States will have to consider during the vetting process.

The final strategic concern that the United States must consider is that of the organizations that already exist to improve the African continent, such as the African Union (AU),⁵² Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),⁵³ African Oil Policy Initiative Group (AOPIG),⁵⁴ the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)⁵⁵ and the United Nations (UN).⁵⁶ American leaders must ensure that when selecting a headquarters location they do not impinge upon the sovereignty nor render impotent the works of these indigenous and international institutions.

Knowledgeable of how strategic concerns have their place in location selection one can now shift focus to the most important factor in selecting a headquarters site: operational objectives and the specific mission sets of USAFRICOM. The essence of selecting the correct location for USAFRICOM revolves around accessibility, infrastructure and geographic requirements. This is extremely important because USAFRICOM has vowed not to build a military base or any major infrastructure on the continent. Therefore, USAFRICOM must be headquartered in a location that has access to the following enabling features and infrastructure:

- 1) A deep-water port with facilities capable of supporting large merchant and combat vessels, because it will be the primary means by which equipment and aid will be delivered to the continent. Most Unified Commands are not located in the vicinity of a deep-water port, but AFRICOM's missions necessitate port access because of the tremendous amount of supplies and equipment that will be delivered on a regular basis. Sea-basing may reduce the need for a deep-water port; however, a harbor capable of handling multiple smaller vessels will still be needed.⁵⁷ In

either case, the docks must be equipped with cargo on/off-load capabilities and have provisions for long-term dry and refrigerated storage.

2) An airfield at least 3,000 meters long with runways and taxiways strong enough to support a 350 thousand kilogram C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft.⁵⁸ Airfields allow for the rapid delivery of equipment, aid and personnel during times of humanitarian crises. Large airfields are also usually associated with commercial airlines and that is a capacity that will be invaluable to USAFRICOM, particularly for the transportation of personnel.

3) A railroad and/or a highway system capable of supporting the distribution of large quantities of supplies and equipment from ports or airfields to inland areas that are not accessible by ships or aircraft. This will be a key part of the distribution network and the primary means by which USAFRICOM members will access inland-landlocked nations.

4) A computer and telecommunications network infrastructure capable of supporting USAFRICOM's demanding Command and Control (C2) requirements.

5) A secure facility large enough to house USAFRICOM's administrative headquarters, including offices, an auditorium, a capacity to secure classified materiel, and ample parking .

6) Secure and suitable living arrangements for USAFRICOM staff and visiting dignitaries. Due to the limited availability of adequate quarters in many parts of Africa, it is likely that some locations would require unaccompanied tours. Family members would stay in a secure location, where there were suitable living conditions, while the service member deploys to the remote location.

7) Weather conducive to uninterrupted year-around operation of ships and aircraft. The recommendations section of the paper will use these seven items and the previously outlined strategic concerns to select the best headquarters location(s).

Recommendations

The first step the United States must take in the creation of USAFRICOM is divulging to African nations all of the reasons for the creation of the command. There is no doubt that the United States is genuinely interested in combating terrorism and providing humanitarian assistance, since there is incontrovertible proof that the United States is a benevolent nation who is willing to use its influence for the betterment and assistance of its global neighbors. However, in addition to the aforementioned objectives, the United States must also reveal that it is interested in the mutually advantageous trade of oil and other natural resources. America should not be timid about stating that it is concerned regarding Chinese influence in the region and demonstrate to Africans how a long-term relationship with the United States would be much more beneficial to their national interests. The United States should promote USAFRICOM as the means to enable free-trade and reciprocity between Africa and North America. However, until the United States is completely forthcoming about all of its objectives in Africa, USAFRICOM will continue to evoke suspicion and encounter opposition.

Africa is unimaginably large at 11,608,000 square miles.⁵⁹ To put the size into some context, the continent would completely envelop the United States, China, Western Europe and Argentina.⁶⁰ When the factor-space concern is combined with the fact that infrastructure across Africa is under-developed and the continent's problems diverse and variable, it becomes intuitive that USAFRICOM will require more than one base of operations. Africa Command should have one administrative headquarters, which also serves as a base of operations in a specific region, and then have four additional regional bases of operation in locations that fulfill the operational objectives and mission sets on the continent. Africa Command has already divided the continent into five regions that mirror that of the African Union: North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa.⁶¹ (*Figure 3*) Therefore, the most logical locations for the

administrative headquarters and bases of operations are: Morocco, serving as the administrative headquarters and a base of operations, with Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya serving as bases of operations for their specific regions. These nations were chosen specifically because they meet the seven minimum requirements to satisfy operational objectives and the mission sets of USAFRICOM. In addition, they are leaders on the continent and each is a stabilizing power in its region of Africa.

Morocco is the prime location for USAFRICOM's administrative headquarters and a base of operations for several important reasons. (*Figure 4*) Morocco's government, although a constitutional monarchy, is politically stable and has accepted many of the principles of western style democratic governance.⁶² Morocco has demonstrated itself to be a neutral Muslim state and is recognized as a leader in the region, possessing significant influence in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶³ It also provides a natural link to the European continent given its proximity and has significant strategic importance because its coastline forms the southern boundary of the Straights of Gibraltar.⁶⁴ A headquarters in Morocco would provide convenient access to European Command and make communications between the two Unified Commands easier because they would be in the same time zone.⁶⁵ Morocco has deep-water ports at Agadir, Casablanca, Mohammedia and Safi that are equipped with the storage and on/off-load capabilities that USAFRICOM will require.⁶⁶ It has 11 airfields that are over 3,000 meters long with the weight rating required for the United States' heaviest transport aircraft, the C-5 Galaxy.⁶⁷ There are over 57,493 kilometers of roads, of which 507 kilometers are expressways, that work in conjunction with the 1,907 kilometers of railway to connect major cities to rural areas.⁶⁸ Telecommunications are abundant and modern, with all required capabilities.⁶⁹ It also is an important junction in the optical communications submarine cable that provides connectivity to Asia, the Middle East and Europe.⁷⁰ In addition, it hosts the earth satellite stations that provide microwave communications on the continent. There are multiple

locations in Morocco that meet the requirements for an administrative headquarters, and sufficient housing to accommodate USAFRICOM's representatives and their families. The climate is temperate and it is subject to few natural disasters.⁷¹ Morocco is the most suitable location on the African continent for USAFRICOM's administrative headquarters.

Nigeria is well-suited to serve as a USAFRICOM base of operations in the Western Region. (*Figure 5*) Nigeria has deep-water ports at Bonny Inshore Terminal, Calabar and Lagos that are equipped with the storage and on/off-load capabilities that USAFRICOM requires.⁷² It has six airfields that are over 3,000 meters long with the required weight rating for the C-5 Galaxy.⁷³ There are 194,394 kilometers of roads, of which 60,068 kilometers are paved, and 3,505 kilometers of railway.⁷⁴ Telecommunications are adequate and rapidly expanding; especially the wireless medium.⁷⁵ It has a connection to the optical communications submarine cable that provides connectivity to Asia, the Middle East and Europe.⁷⁶ There are multiple locations that meet the requirements for a base of operations and sufficient housing to accommodate USAFRICOM's representatives.⁷⁷ The climate varies widely from equatorial in the south, tropical in the center and arid in the north.⁷⁸ The only natural disaster of concern is flooding.⁷⁹ Nigeria is a major power-player in the Western Region. They are a prominent member of the African Union and have adopted many of the security missions in the Gulf of Guinea.

Cameroon is well-suited to serve as a USAFRICOM base of operations in the Central Region. (*Figure 6*) Cameroon has deep-water ports at Douala and Limboh Terminal that are equipped with the storage and on/off-load capabilities that USAFRICOM requires.⁸⁰ It also has two airfields that are over 3,000 meters long with the weight rating required for the C-5 Galaxy.⁸¹ There are 50,000 kilometers of roads, of which 5,000 kilometers are paved, and 987 kilometers of railway.⁸² Telecommunications are barely adequate, but this obstacle could be overcome by military operated and commercially available satellite communications.⁸³ It has a limited

connection to the optical communications submarine cable that provides connectivity to Asia, the Middle East and Europe.⁸⁴ There are adequate locations for a base of operations and sufficient lodging to house USAFRICOM's representatives.⁸⁵ The climate varies with terrain features, from tropical along the coast to semiarid and hot in north.⁸⁶ Natural disasters include volcanic activity with intermittent releases of poisonous gases from volcanoes in the area.⁸⁷ Cameroon, although immediately adjacent to Nigeria, is recognized as a leader in the Central Region and, unlike many of the other nations in the area, has a stable government.

South Africa is poised to serve as a strategic anchor point for a USAFRICOM base of operations in the Southern Region of Africa. (*Figure 7*) South Africa has deep-water ports at Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay and Saldanha Bay that are equipped with the storage and on/off-load capabilities that USAFRICOM will need in the region.⁸⁸ It has ten airfields that are over 3,000 meters long with the weight rating required for the C-5 Galaxy.⁸⁹ There are over 362,099 kilometers of roads, of which 239 kilometers are expressways, and 20,872 kilometers of railways that connect its ports to rural areas.⁹⁰ Telecommunications are the most developed and modern on the African continent.⁹¹ South Africa is a major hub on the optical communications submarine cable that provides connectivity to Asia, the Middle East and Europe.⁹² There are several sites that meet the requirements for a base of operation and sufficient quarters to lodge USAFRICOM's representatives.⁹³ The climate is mostly semiarid, with subtropical areas along the east coast.⁹⁴ President Bush has recognized South Africa as a "country with [a] major impact on their neighborhood and [one that] require[s] focused attention."⁹⁵

Kenya is also considered by President Bush to be a strategic anchor point in the Eastern Region of Africa.⁹⁶ (*Figure 8*) Kenya has a deep-water port at Mombasa that is equipped with the storage, and on/off-load capabilities that USAFRICOM requires.⁹⁷ It also has four airfields that are over 3,000 meters long with the weight rating required for the C-5 Galaxy.⁹⁸ There are 63,265

kilometers of roads, of which 8,933 kilometers are paved. Kenya also has 2,778 kilometers of railway.⁹⁹ Telecommunications are barely adequate, but this could be overcome by military operated and commercially available satellite communications.¹⁰⁰ There are sites that meet the requirements for a base of operation and sufficient housing to lodge USAFRICOM's representatives.¹⁰¹ The climate varies from tropical along the coast to arid in the interior.¹⁰² Kenya has had longstanding relations with the United States and has good relationships with its neighbors. Kenya is a key factor in stabilizing the Eastern Region.¹⁰³

One might argue that these recommendations are moot since many of the aforementioned countries have already refused to host USAFRICOM. However, in this instance it is likely that “no” is not an absolute answer, and what it really means is “maybe.” The United States is in the initial courting stage with many African nations, so they will likely have to date a little longer before they can get a commitment to a long-term relationship. In the interim, the United States should forge ahead with its plan for USAFRICOM from its temporary headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany and continue proving to Africans that its interest on the continent is authentic.¹⁰⁴ There has been and will continue to be offers from African nations, like Liberia,¹⁰⁵ to host USAFRICOM; however, the United States should not hastily accept the first country who offers its territory. Waiting for Morocco, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya to agree to host USAFRICOM will allow the United States to best meet its strategic and operational objectives on the continent and grow to be the friend to Africa that it genuinely wants to become.

Conclusion

The creation of USAFRICOM has been welcomed by many African nations and met with much skepticism by others. Those who are skeptical wonder if USAFRICOM is nothing more than the United States' attempt at neo-colonialism. One can understand their cynicism if a comparison is

made between the African policies under the Clinton Administration to that of the Bush

Administration. The Clinton Administration's national security strategy for Africa stated:

“The United States has very little strategic interest in Africa.” and that “U.S. humanitarian and political interests in Africa are significant, economic interests limited, and security interests minimal.”¹⁰⁶

- Joseph Nye

The Bush Administration's policy is the antithesis of the Clinton Administration's of just ten years prior:

“Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high priority for this Administration. It is a place of promise and opportunity, linked to the United States by history, culture, commerce and strategic significance. The United States recognizes that our security depends on partnering with Africans to strengthen fragile and failing states and bring ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies.”¹⁰⁷

- U.S. National Security Strategy 2006

The genesis of this relatively rapid shift of U.S. policy is undoubtedly the result of the Global War on Terrorism and to a lesser degree the influence of China in the region, natural resource development and humanitarian crises. Africa Command is the United States' first step toward ameliorating these growing concerns and it is actively seeking a location for its headquarters on the African continent. The selection process must account for strategic concerns and operational objectives in the region. However, since USAFRICOM does not plan to build a military base or large-scale infrastructure on the continent, operational objectives and mission set requirements should be the primary driver behind location selection. Africa's immense size and diversity requires that multiple locations be established. The most advantageous construct would be to have an Administrative headquarters, which would also serve as a base of operations, and four satellite bases of operations in locations that will best allow USAFRICOM to meet its operational objectives. The most logical locations are: Morocco, serving as the administrative headquarters and a base of operations, with Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya serving as bases of operations for their specific regions.

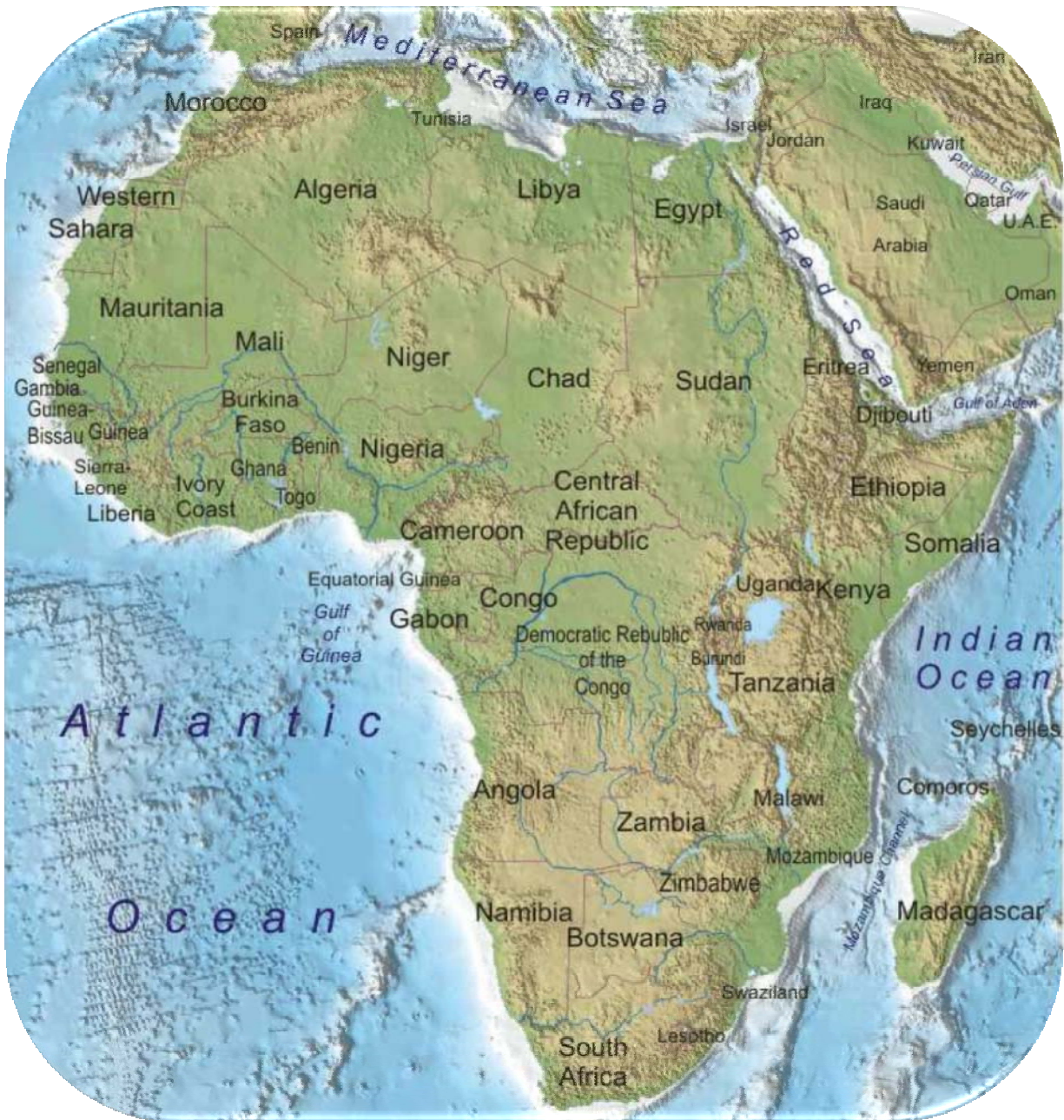


Figure 1. Map of Africa. Reprinted from Geographic Guide.
(<http://www.geographicguide.net/africa/images/physical-africa.jpg>).

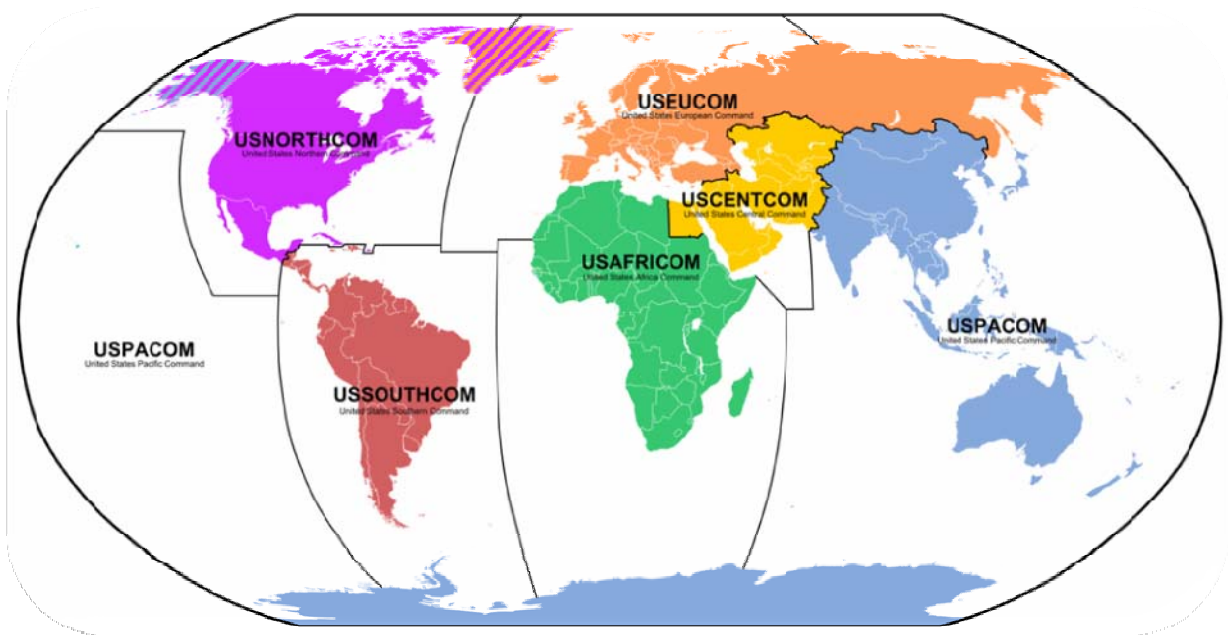


Figure 2. Geographic Unified Command Map. Reprinted from U.S. Department of State Website. (http://www.state.gov/cms_images/map_security_assistance.jpg) .

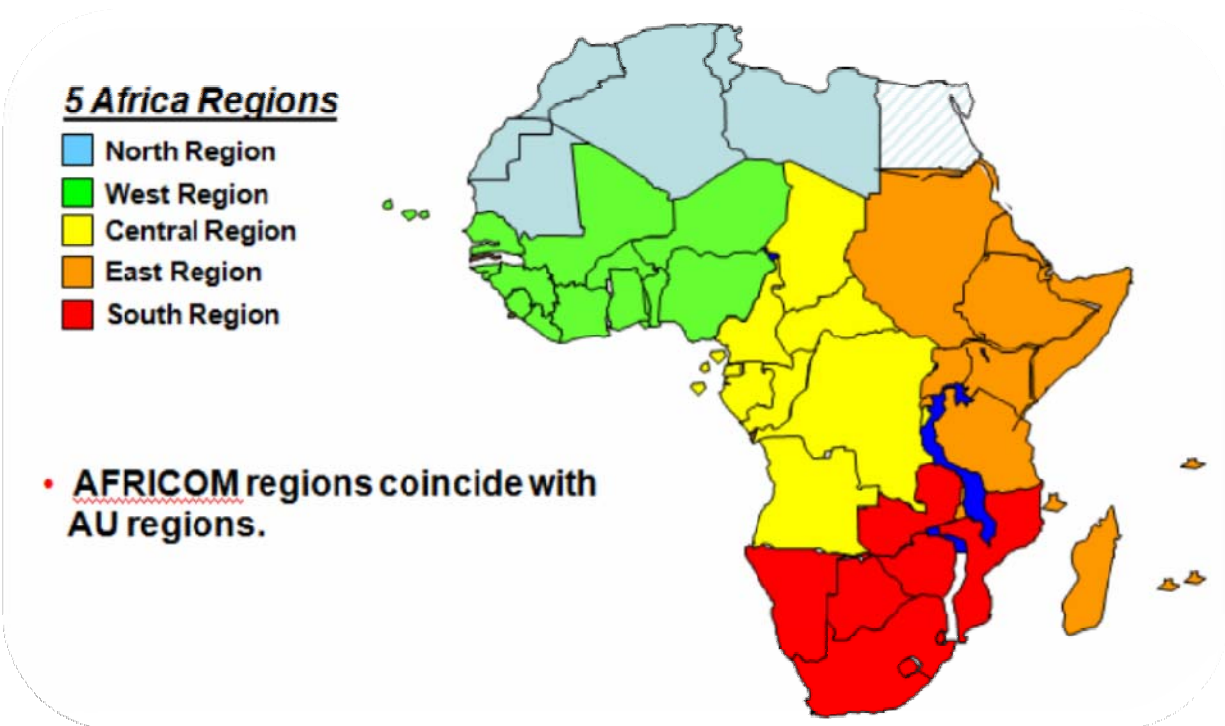


Figure 3. USAFRICOM and AU Regional Map. Adapted from USAFRICOM Brief “Building the Command” (March 20 2008).



Figure 4. Map of Morocco. Reprinted from C.S. Utah Website. (http://www.cs.utah.edu/~regehr/morocco/morocco_map.gif)



Figure 5. Map of Nigeria. Reprinted from Geographic Guide (<http://www.geographicguide.net/africa/maps/nigeria.jpg>)



Figure 6. Map of Cameroon. Reprinted from University of Texas On-line Library (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/cameroon_pol98.jpg)



Figure 7. Map of South Africa. Reprinted from University of Texas On-line Library (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/south_africa.jpg)



Figure 8. Map of Kenya. Reprinted from Blissites Website (<http://www.blissites.com/kenya/ciamap.gif>)

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